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Team collaboration during the concept and viability stage of the development process

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ABSTRACT

PURPOSE: The purpose of the research is to study team collaboration during the concept and viability stage of the property development process. Most construction project teams comprise participants from different professions that combine to form temporary organisations aimed at achieving the common objective of delivering a project. Available tools can facilitate an environment, conducive to better collaboration and integration of people and processes, which ultimately contributes to better value for the producer. However, the implementation of these tools among the professional team in the Johannesburg context is not well understood.

METHODS: A pragmatic approach was used in this exploratory study. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The results were analysed using qualitative content analysis and descriptive statistics using the mean and median.

RESULTS: The qualitative data indicated, across teams, that there is a focus on design related roles and responsibilities and that legislative functions are least fulfilled. Quantitative analysis indicated that teams' overall implementation of available tools and techniques are relatively low, and knowledge boundaries related to cost domain are most common. Reasons for not implementing proposed collaborative tools and techniques include *the lack of skills, not understanding the need for implementation, poor communication, perceived risk and preference.* Means to improve the current level of collaboration and integration include*; improving the process and implementation, better communication, teamwork and training*.

IMPLICATIONS: The lack of collaboration impacts the effectivity of the development process.

CONCLUSIONS: The misalignment between the prescribed and practiced roles and responsibilities suggest that there is a disconnect between the regulative authorities` theoretical understanding of the project design delivery processes and the actual processes. Contractual relations are based on this understanding, resulting in teams where members are driven to achieve individual goals and are not necessarily focusing on creating value for the client. A conscious effort to understand and improve the context in which teams operate is conducive to better collaboration and is essential for an improvement in development design delivery process efficiency. Knowledge boundaries can be bridged through the use of collaborative tools. The study`s appraisal of the level of implementation of digital collaborative tools used by the various team members underlined areas in need of improvement within the Northern Johannesburg context. These include real time project communication, transparent project information, online management services and collaborative cost estimation.

Key words: concept and viability stage, value creation, socio-cognitive theory, project team collaboration, knowledge boundaries